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Laws For Seniors • Laws For Children • Education Laws
Environment Laws • Major Public Acts • Laws for Businesses

Dear Neighbor:

It was enough to make you sick. In fact, I did get sick, as the picture shows. But I would not leave until my vote was cast against the Rowland tax increases and bad budget.

I prepared this newsletter to let you know some of the reasons I voted against this shortsighted, unfair budget. There were many more reasons, which would fill up a brochure larger than this one. Indeed, to vote otherwise would have meant betraying your interests, something I will not do in spite of all the blandishments of the administration, lobbyists, or ideologues. I pledge that I will continue defending you and your family's best interests.



Bob, after an all-night session, recuperating outside the House Chamber before a vote.

It is important to me to hear from you. For details on any issue, for information, for help with state agencies, don't hesitate to call, write, or e-mail me. It is a pleasure to serve you and our neighbors, and the people of Danbury and our area.

Bob

*Bob with local advocates
for clean air in our schools.*
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bob GODFREY
state representative
110th District

Not all the news is bad. It was a good year for the environment, for public safety, for my fellow veterans, for open government. You should have received my special newsletter on education gains, and will get my report on how I'm addressing our state's horrible traffic problems later this year. And I look forward to your participation in my constituent survey in the new year.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE **BOB GODFREY** DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

110TH DISTRICT • DANBURY

Capitol News

Too Many Lose

When the final version of the budget finally came out, many of us couldn't believe our eyes. The drastic cuts to our social programs will seriously hurt our most vulnerable citizens, especially children and the elderly. The taxes that were raised are going to directly hit our working families and middle class, but not those making over a million dollars a year. The rest of the shortfall is covered with onetime gimmicks that are shortsighted and irresponsible. After the Governor vetoed two budgets that would have more responsibly lessened the deficit, we were forced to vote on this proposal. There were so many reasons to vote no on this budget, when I started to hear from all of you in the district and with my own conscience reeling, I knew that was exactly what I had to do. Here are just a few "lowlights" from this budget that you and I couldn't stomach:

Unconscionable Cuts

- ➔ *ConnPACE (the state prescription drug subsidy for seniors) applicants will not only have a new asset test (\$100,000 for singles, \$125,000 for couples) but now the state will try to reclaim the money from the person's estate;*
- ➔ *Education funds and other state grants to towns, including Danbury, have been cut significantly, putting a further burden on our local governments and property tax payers;*
- ➔ *Programs that assist our most vulnerable children and poorest residents have been cut so dramatically I fear many needy kids will not get the health care they require and may be forced out of their homes;*
- ➔ *Medicaid and General Assistance (SAGA) recipients who are trying to get back into the workforce now have to pay additional co-pays for doctor visits and medication they desperately need but can't afford.*

Unfair Tax Increases

- ➔ *Governor Rowland promised to abolish the income tax (a bad idea). Instead he raised the income tax (a worse idea). I voted against his increases in the income tax. I support the millionaires tax.*
- ➔ *The property tax credit on the income tax, which helps our middle income working families, has been decreased from \$500 to \$350;*
- ➔ *The back-to-school sales tax free week that I introduced has been suspended indefinitely and the \$75 sales tax exemption on clothing has been reduced to \$50;*
- ➔ *The property tax exemption for the disabled has been done away with.*

Dumb Gimmicks

- ➔ *We borrowed against the Tobacco Settlement Fund but now the interest will cost us millions down the road;*
- ➔ *We borrowed \$144 million from the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund and \$50 million from the Clean Energy Fund, neither of them taxpayer funds, which will cost us millions in interest over the next seven years.*

And after all this we're still nearly \$100 million in the hole!!!



Bob and Joellen Lawson, Executive Director of the Canary Committee, at the Indoor Air Quality in Schools public hearing. Bob introduced this important law.



Bob and Rep. Betty Boukus with the 2003 YMCA Youth and Government officers when they visited the Capitol. Bob has sponsored this program for many years.



Bob and State Treasurer Denise Nappier in Bethel earlier this year.



Honest and Open Government

In recent months Connecticut has become known as “*Corrupticut*” due to the numerous scandals and bid rigging schemes by the highest offices of our state and local governments. I support the opening up of government so you know what your elected officials are up to. I sponsored several bills that will shine some light on public officials.

- Any company that does business with Connecticut **cannot** give gifts to state employees, and all companies will have equal access to information when bidding for contracts. A new pre-qualification process will ensure the integrity and quality of companies doing business in Connecticut. (PA 03-215)
- Agencies, like the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority, must submit their annual compliance audits to the state Auditors of Public Accounts and the General Assembly for oversight to keep them honest. (PA 03-133)
- We opened up the primary election system in Connecticut and placed campaign finance requirements on mayors and first selectmen to see if they are receiving funds from companies with municipal contracts. (PA 03-241)



Bob and students from Maimonides Academy in the House Chamber.

Changes In Your Electric Rates

In January 2000, electric rates were reduced by 8% as required by law. This law ends January 1, 2004. But in March you saw an 8% increase due to a change in the federally required congestion charge. Rates could rise by another 12 - 20% as of January 1, 2004.

I joined with other members of the General Assembly to limit these increases. We tried to protect rates for residential and small business customers, and to hold rate increases to 3-4%. We wanted to look at how electric contracts are bid and to be able to reject bids that were unreasonably high or not in the public interest. We also wanted bids and contracts open to public inspection. We felt it was necessary, as electric rates increase, to establish a fund to help people with their electric bills as more people will be hurt, especially those on fixed incomes.

Unfortunately, these ideas did not pass. *That is why I had to vote against the bill.* If rates rise too high, we will need to revisit this issue because it will have a negative impact on individual customers and our entire economy. (PA 03-135)



Environment

- On January 1, 2004 we are banning **MTBE**, a highly soluble contaminant, from our gas to protect our drinking water; (PA 03-122)
- All coal burning power plants must lower their mercury emissions by 90% by July 1, 2012; (PA 03-72)
- The moratorium on projects in Long Island Sound has been extended for another year so the state can assess the environmental significance of several projects and better plan where these installations will be the least detrimental. (PA 03-148 & 03-263)



Bob presents a Green Flag Award to Huckleberry Hill School for environmental excellence.



Bob with students from Danbury High School who visited the Capitol to learn about state government.



Bob with Jim Walsh at the opening of the Danbury Youth Services office. Bob helped secure funds for a new facility.

Veterans

In the 2003 session the General Assembly made it a priority to recognize veterans and active duty military personnel, especially at this time of heightened aggression.

- All veterans who have 90 days of active duty service since August 2, 1990 will be eligible for property tax exemptions, education and other benefits. (PA 03-85)
- I introduced a bill that allows cities the *option* to increase the income eligibility limits for the veterans' property tax exemption to \$51,100 for single veterans or a surviving spouse, and \$56,900 for married veterans or exempt 10% of the property value. (PA 03-44)
- Banks must maintain for two years and two months the mortgage application of any U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard reservist called into active duty after submitting a mortgage application but prior to the application's approval. (PA 03-24)

Public Safety

- In order to fight terrorism, any threat that is made against a individual, or any threat that causes an evacuation of a building or public place will be punished much more severely. (PA 03-22)
- We passed a graduated license program for new drivers to ensure they have the necessary experience before they start carrying passengers. (PA 03-171)
- All convicted felons will be required to submit a DNA sample to be used like a fingerprint for investigating crimes. (PA 03-242)
- Any driver involved in a car accident resulting in death or serious injury will be tested for alcohol and drugs. Any person convicted of drunk driving must complete a mandatory treatment program before their license is reinstated. (PA 03-265)
- We strengthened safety standards for nightclubs and other places that use indoor fireworks so Connecticut doesn't experience a tragedy like Rhode Island did. (PA 03-231)

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